GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2609
ANSWERED ON:18.03.2008
FREEDOM FIGHTER PENSION SCHEME
Yadav Shri Devendra Prasad

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any amendment has been made in the freedom fighters pension scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the cases for sanction of the said pension are considered on the basis of the recommendations of State Governments;

(d) if so, the terms and conditions for sanctioning the said pension;

(e) whether some people were sanctioned pension on the basis of proof of Court records and in the light of recommendations of State Governments, whereas, others were deprived of pension though fulfilling the same criteria; and

(f) if so, the reasons for such anomaly in sanctioning of pension?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS(SHRI MANIKRAO H. GAVIT)

(a) to (d): In 1969, the Government of India introduced a scheme known as the 'Ex-Andaman Political Prisoners Pension Scheme' to honour freedom fighters. In 1972, on the eve of the 25th Anniversary of India's Independence, a regular scheme called the "Freedom Fighters' Pension Scheme" was introduced for granting pension to freedom fighters. This Scheme was liberalized and renamed as the "Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme" with effect from 1st August, 1980. Salient features of the 'Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme, 1980' are given below:

(i) Eligibility: The following categories of freedom fighters are eligible for the Samman Pension under the Scheme:

Eligible dependents of martyrs;

A person who had suffered minimum imprisonment of six months on account of participation in freedom struggle;

A person who, on account of his participation in freedom struggle, remained underground for more than six months;

A person who, on account of participation in the freedom struggle, was interned in his home or externed from his district for a minimum period of six months;

A person whose property was confiscated or attached and sold due to participation in the freedom struggle;

A person who, on account of participation in freedom struggle, became permanently incapacitated during firing or lathi charge;

A person who lost his Government job for participation in freedom struggle; and

A person who was awarded the punishment of 10 strokes of caning/flogging/whipping due to his participation in freedom struggle.

(ii) Dependents: Spouses (widows/widowers), unmarried and unemployed daughters (up-to maximum three) and parents of deceased freedom fighters (as also of martyrs) are eligible for grant of dependent family pension under the scheme.

(iii) Special Dispensation For Women And Weaker Sections of the Society:

The eligibility criteria for grant of pension on grounds of jail suffering specifies a minimum period of six months which the freedom fighters should have undergone in connection with the freedom movement. However, as a special dispensation for women freedom fighters and for the freedom fighters belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the minimum period has been kept at three months.

(iv) Freedom Fighters are required to apply on the prescribed application form for grant of pension under the Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme, 1980. Applications, supported by requisite evidence of claimed sufferings are required to be routed

through the concerned State Government/Union Territory Administration. Claims for grant of Central Samman pension are considered only when these are duly verified and recommended by the concerned State Government /Union Territory Administration in accordance with the provisions of the Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme, 1980. Verification and recommendatory report of State Government/Union Territory Administration is mandatory in view of the fact that documents and evidence of claimed sufferings are in the possession of the concerned State Government/Union Territory Administration. However, a positive recommendation of the State Government is not binding on the Central Government if the claimant does not satisfy the eligibility criteria and evidentiary requirements prescribed under the Scheme.

(e) & (f) : Some freedom fighters have been sanctioned Samman pension in compliance with the directions of courts. However, the provisions prescribed under the Swatantrata Sainik Samman Pension Scheme, 1980 were kept in view while taking a decision to sanction Samman pension in such cases. No freedom fighter who fulfills the prescribed eligibility conditions and evidentiary requirements and applies for grant of Samman pension as per procedure is deprived of the pension.